

CLAIMS

1. A composition comprising a mixture of monoalkyl and polyalkyl lactyllactates of formula:



in which R represents an alkyl radical containing a number of carbon atoms ranging from 1 to 4 and n is an integer equal to 2, 3 or 4.

2. The composition as claimed in claim 1, characterized in that the alkyl radical is a methyl, ethyl, isopropyl or n-butyl radical.

3. The composition as claimed in claim 2, characterized in that the alkyl radical is an ethyl radical.

4. The composition as claimed in one of claims 1 to 3, characterized in that it comprises:

- 35 to 85 parts by weight of alkyl lactyllactate (n = 2 in formula (I)), AL<sub>2</sub> below;
- 10 to 60 parts by weight of alkyl dilactyllactate (n = 3 in formula (I)), AL<sub>3</sub> below; and
- 1 to 20 parts by weight of alkyl trilactyllactate (n = 4 in formula (I)), AL<sub>4</sub> below;

AL<sub>2</sub> + AL<sub>3</sub> + AL<sub>4</sub> representing 100 parts by weight.

5. The composition as claimed in one of claims 1 to 4, characterized in that it also contains an alkyl lactate of formula  $\text{CH}_3\text{CH}(\text{OH})\text{CO}_2\text{R}$  (II) in which R

has the same meaning as in formula (I), in a proportion of from 0.1 to 1 part by weight per 100 parts by weight of the mixture  $AL_2 + AL_3 + AL_4$ .

6. The composition as claimed in one of claims 1 to 5, characterized in that it also contains polyalkyl lactylactates (I) in which n is greater than 4, in a proportion of from 0.1 to 4 parts by weight per 100 parts by weight of the mixture  $AL_2 + AL_3 + AL_4$ .
7. The use of a composition as claimed in any one of claims 1 to 6, as an agent for cleaning and/or degreasing metallic components.
8. The use of a composition as claimed in any one of claims 1 to 6, also containing at least one solvent, as an agent for cleaning and/or degreasing metallic components.
9. The use as claimed in claim 8, characterized in that the solvent is n-butyl butoxypropionate.